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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Saigon More Optimistic Over Peace Prospects

The Saigon press and some political leaders have recently begun to take a more optimistic line on the prospects for peace. In contrast to the pessimism that followed the signing of the Paris communique on 13 June, some papers are now referring hopefully to the reduction in the level of hostilities, and to new diplomatic initiatives. Many have speculated that the Nixon-Brezhnev meeting and the cooperative spirit among the great powers are favorable signs for peace in Indochina. Senate Chairman Huyen asserted that prospects for peace are now better than ever.

Senior government officials have indicated privately that they are satisfied with the Paris communique. Presidential aide Hoang Duc Nha reportedly said that Saigon had achieved almost all it could have hoped for without having to concede anything of substance. Nha stated that, in retrospect, there was little cause for the anxiety of President Thieu and his advisers before the document was signed.

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CAMBODIA

The Military Situation

Government forces encountered little resistance in reopening Route 5 between Phnom Penh and Battambang on 25 June. Convoys carrying badly needed rice for Phnom Penh are scheduled to begin using the highway immediately and could start arriving as early as 26 June.

The government made little headway on 24 and 25 June in trying to reopen Route 6 northeast of Phnom Penh and to relieve the isolated garrison at Phaav. Some progress was made, however, in clearing the Communists from the area between Route 6 and the Mekong. South of Phnom Penh, government troops failed over the weekend to clear Route 3 and recapture the town of Prey Totung, some 15 miles from the capital. Communist forces, meanwhile, continued to probe government positions along Routes 3 and 2 southeast of the capital.

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